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Ms. Lauren Daigle

Dear Lauren,

I write to pledge my support to you and voice my concern over the actions of the Mayor of New Orleans who appears to be targeting you due to your recent expression of your faith.

I was shocked and dismayed to learn that Mayor Cantrell, on official City of New Orleans letterhead, wrote to Dick Clark Productions in a misguided attempt to have you removed from the lineup of the New Orleans “New Year’s Rockin Eve” Celebration. The Mayor is attempting to retaliate against you because, as I understand it, a group of individuals gathered in November in the French Quarter to protest and worship through prayer and song in a public square. You encountered the protesters while passing through on your bike and, at their invitation, you sang one song with them.

Mayor Cantrell apparently directed city police to disperse the protest. Unbelievably, the Mayor questioned the organizer’s faith – claiming the protest was organized under “the pretense of religion.” She instructed city agencies “to pursue every angle possible to hold these individuals accountable.”

The Mayor’s disapproval of that protest is lamentable. It occurred in the same location as a June protest that the city allowed. The religious protest has not been tied to any COVID-19 outbreaks, unlike the recent “Naughty Nawlins” swinger convention, which – according to *The Gambit* – got the city’s de facto blessing.

The Louisiana Legislature reinforced the rights of individuals to worship freely by adopting the Preservation of Religious Freedom Act. *See* La. Rev. Stat. 13:5232 (“Free exercise of religion is a fundamental right of the highest order in this state.”). State and federal law protect your right to assemble in a public square to worship and protest. United States Supreme Court Associate Justice Neil Gorsuch has recently explained that the “Government is not free to disregard the First Amendment in times of crisis.” *Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn v. Cuomo*. Additionally, you are entitled to protection under Louisiana law from tortious interference with your private contractual relationships.

Your rights to protest and worship are enshrined in the First Amendment. I vow to do everything in my power to protect them. And I offer my assistance to work with more hospitable regions in our State, like your home Parish of Lafayette, if you and Dick Clark Productions wish to move the event.

For Louisiana,

Jeff Landry  
Attorney General